

MARVEL

#15

SPENCER
PINA
GUINALDO
ROSENBERG

Steve ★ Rogers
**CAPTAIN
AMERICA**



Super-Soldier. Avenger. Agent of Hydra. He is...

Steve★Rogers
**CAPTAIN
AMERICA**



Steve Rogers' reality has been secretly rewritten by Kobik, a sentient Cosmic Cube acting under the influence of the Red Skull. In Steve's new history, a Hydra agent named Elisa Sinclair enrolled Steve in a school where he was trained to believe in Hydra's ideals--and befriended a young Helmut Zemo. Later, Steve would return to the U.S. to become the first Super-Soldier and Hydra's ultimate spy, but he remained close friends with Helmut--until the Red Skull betrayed Hydra and caused the death of Helmut's father.

In the present, the Avengers Unity Squad*--formerly under the command of Steve Rogers--has struck a decisive blow against the Red Skull, excising the mental powers he'd stolen from Charles Xavier and leaving him weakened. The Skull believes Steve Rogers is still under his command, but Steve has his own agenda, and the Red Skull is standing in his way...

***WARNING! READ THIS ISSUE AFTER UNCANNY AVENGERS #22, ON SALE NOW!**

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Captain America created by Joe Simon & Jack Kirby

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I HAVE WAITED
SO LONG FOR
THIS, SKULL.

TO WATCH YOUR
OWN PLAN BECOME
YOUR **UNDOING**.


YOU BELIEVED YOU
HAD MADE ME YOUR
PERFECT SOLDIER.



THAT THROUGH THE POWER
OF THE COSMIC CUBE, YOU
HAD CHANGED WHO I AM.

BUT IN REALITY, YOU
ONLY REVEALED MY
TRUE SELF...

...THOUGH THE
KNOWLEDGE OF THAT
ALONE WAS NOT ENOUGH
TO DEFEAT YOU.



YOU POSSESSED THE
BRAIN OF CHARLES
XAVIER, MAKING YOU
THE WORLD'S MOST
POWERFUL TELEPATH--

--WHICH MEANT I COULD NEVER GET
CLOSE ENOUGH TO ACT AGAINST
YOU--FOR FEAR THAT MY OWN
THOUGHTS WOULD BETRAY ME--



--SO I FOUND
OTHERS TO
DO IT FOR ME.

A TEAM OF AVENGERS, X-MEN AND
INHUMANS WHO COULD BE LED TO
BELIEVE THAT THEY THEMSELVES HAD
THE IDEA TO BRING YOU DOWN--

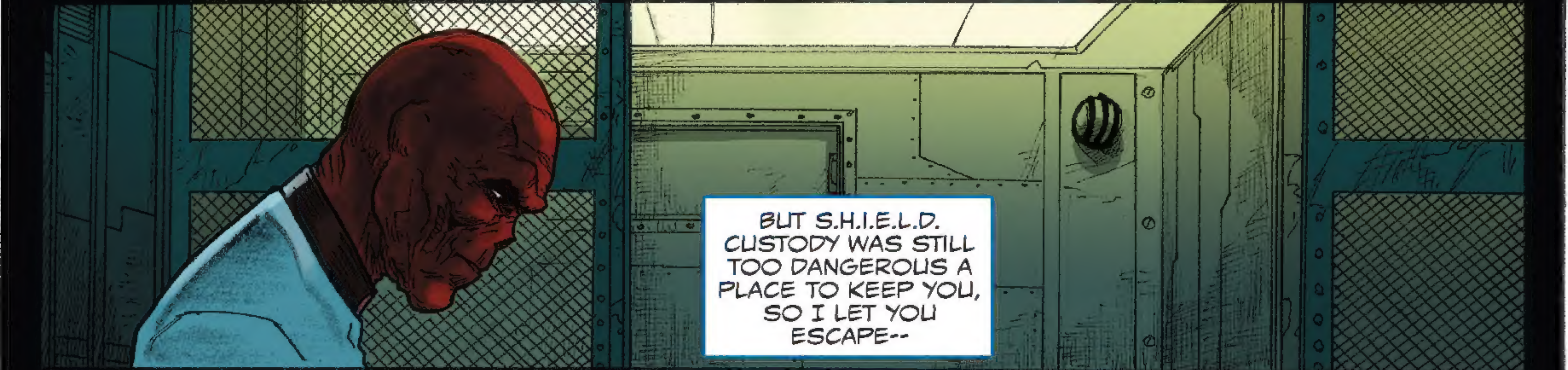


--EVEN AS I
PULLED THEIR
STRINGS THE
ENTIRE TIME.



IN THE END, THEY
SUCCEEDED IN
TAKING XAVIER'S
BRAIN BACK, LEAVING
YOU POWERLESS--

--AND
AT MY
MERCY.



BUT S.H.I.E.L.D.
CUSTODY WAS STILL
TOO DANGEROUS A
PLACE TO KEEP YOU,
SO I LET YOU
ESCAPE--



--RESCUED
BY YOUR
DAUGHTER,
SIN.

SHE BROUGHT YOU
BACK TO YOUR
ESTATE, WHERE IT
ALL BEGAN--

--AND WHERE YOU WILL FINALLY ANSWER FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE.

WELCOME HOME, JOHANN--

--FOR THE LAST TIME.

EASY, FATHER--YOU'RE STILL WEAK FROM THE SURGERY--

YES, SIN... HELP ME TO MY CHAMBERS-- I NEED TO REST--

--I MUST BE READY FOR WHEN OUR GUEST ARRIVES.

OH, FATHER, THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT, I'M AFRAID.

HE'S ALREADY HERE.

SUPREME LEADER...I CAME AS QUICKLY AS I COULD. IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU IN THE FLESH AGAIN...

...IT'S BEEN SO LONG.

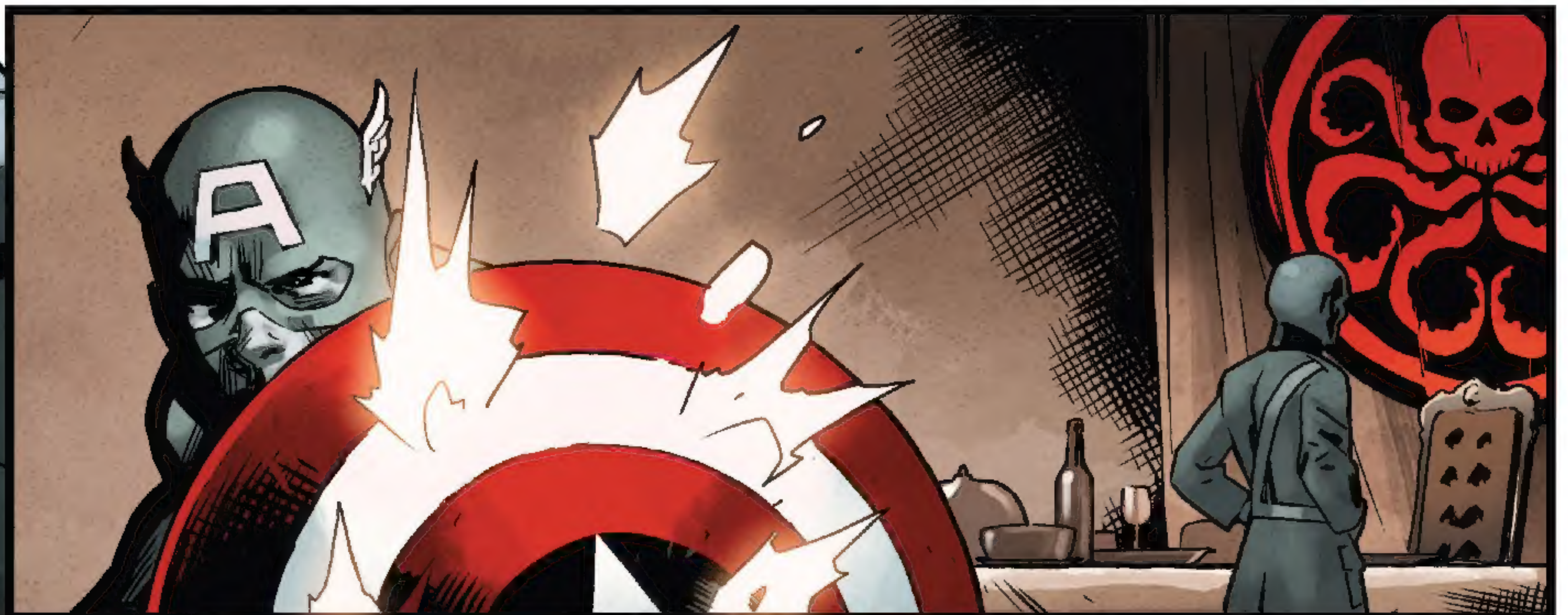
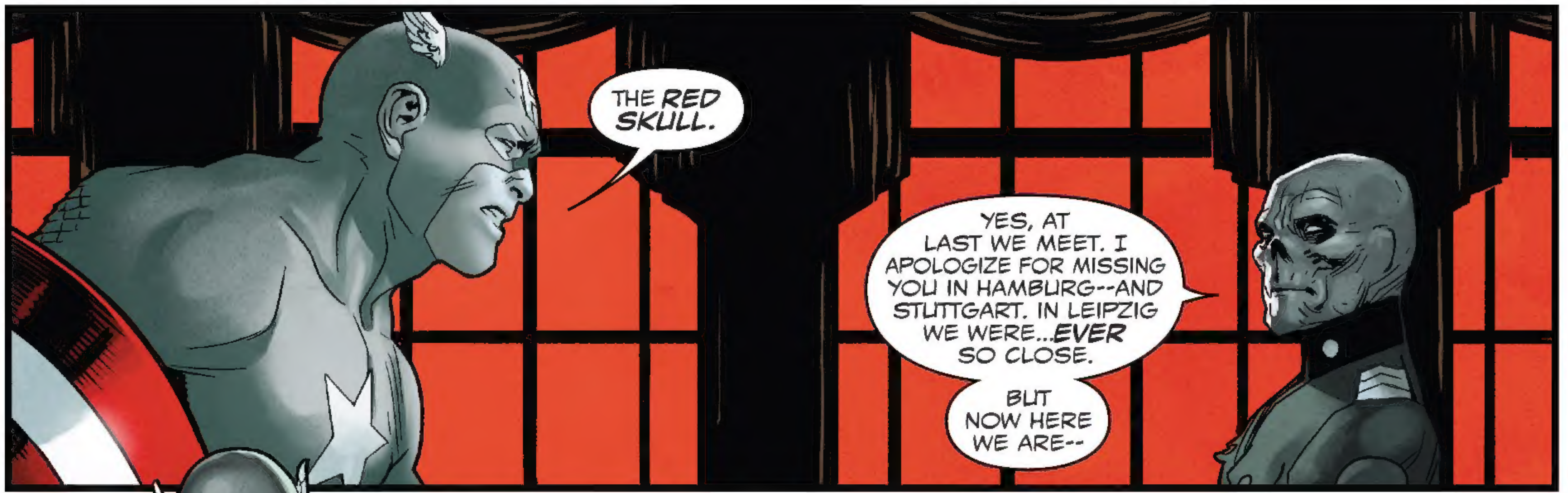
1945.
GERMANY.

AH, AT
LONG LAST--
**CAPTAIN
AMERICA**



--IT IS MY
PLEASURE TO
WELCOME YOU TO
BERLIN, HERR
ROGERS.





NOW.

DIRECTOR ROGERS--HAILING, ALL FREQUENCIES--DIRECTOR ROGERS, PLEASE REPORT IN--

STILL NO RESPONSE, MA'AM.

COME ON, STEVE--WHERE ARE YOU?

COMMANDER--

--SHOULD WE KEEP WAITING?

--SIGH-- NO. HE WOULD WANT US TO GO AHEAD. PROCEED.

YES, MA'AM--

"AT 0400 HOURS, THE CAPITAL CITY OF SOKOVIA WAS OVERRUN, AND THE GOVERNMENT AND REBEL FORCES BOTH ISSUED FORMAL SURRENDERS TO HYDRA.

"WE'RE TRYING TO VERIFY THE STATUS OF GENERAL NOVOTY--

"--BUT OUR BEST INTEL SAYS HE DID NOT SURVIVE THE ATTACK."

OBVIOUSLY, HYDRA TAKING OVER A COUNTRY IN EASTERN EUROPE IS A CATASTROPHICALLY DESTABILIZING EVENT FOR THE REGION AND THE WORLD--

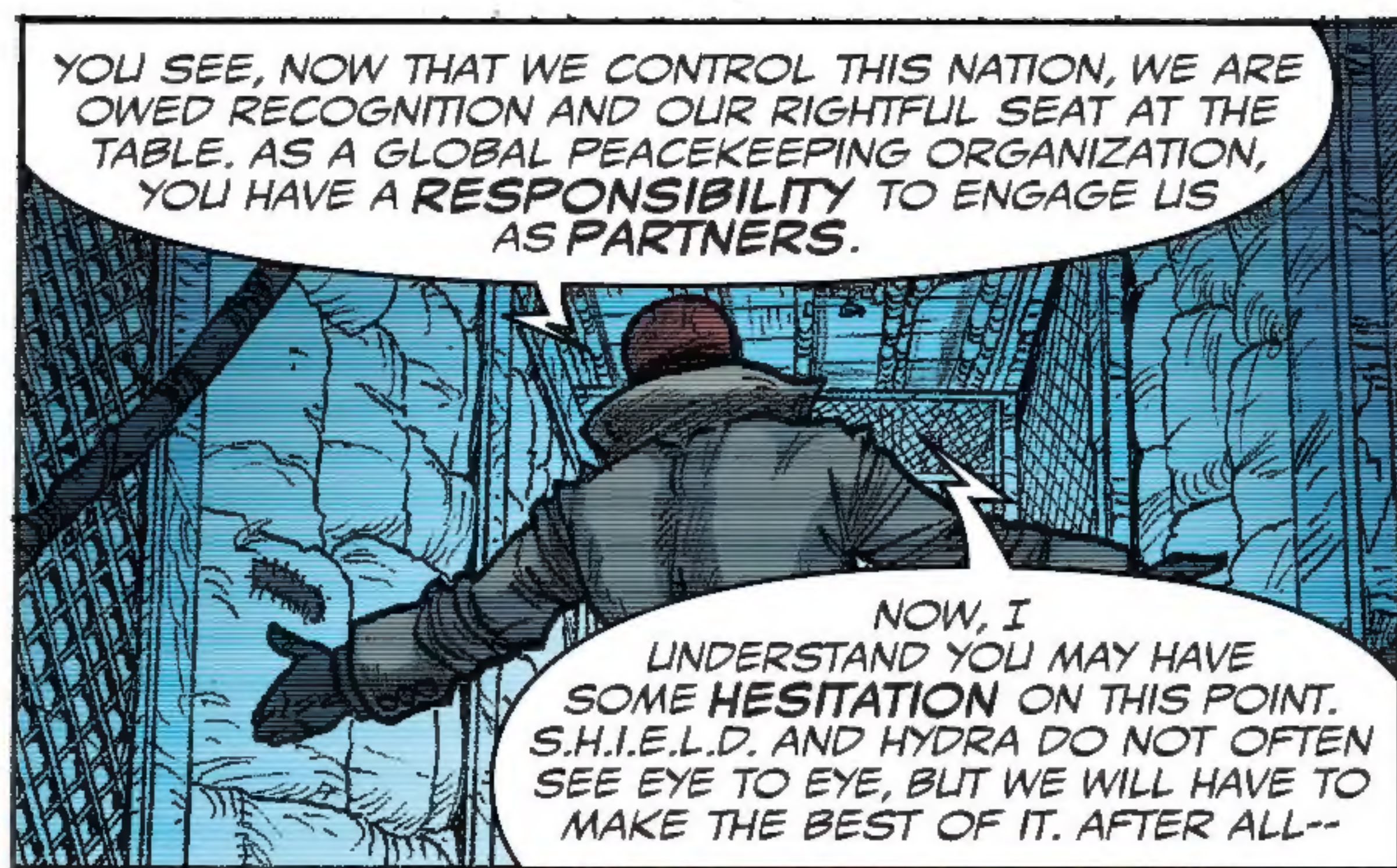
--BUT THEN WE RECEIVED THIS MESSAGE ON A SECURE CHANNEL--

GREETINGS, MEN AND WOMEN OF S.H.I.E.L.D....



...I COME TO YOU TODAY AS THE NEWLY APPOINTED **SOVEREIGN LEADER** OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOKOVIA. NO NEED TO CONGRATULATE ME.

IN FACT, THERE'S LITTLE TIME FOR PLEASANTRIES OF ANY KIND. WE HAVE **SO MUCH** WORK TO DO.



YOU SEE, NOW THAT WE CONTROL THIS NATION, WE ARE OWED RECOGNITION AND OUR RIGHTFUL SEAT AT THE TABLE. AS A GLOBAL PEACEKEEPING ORGANIZATION, YOU HAVE A **RESPONSIBILITY** TO ENGAGE US AS PARTNERS.

NOW, I UNDERSTAND YOU MAY HAVE SOME **HESITATION** ON THIS POINT. S.H.I.E.L.D. AND HYDRA DO NOT OFTEN SEE EYE TO EYE, BUT WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT. AFTER ALL--



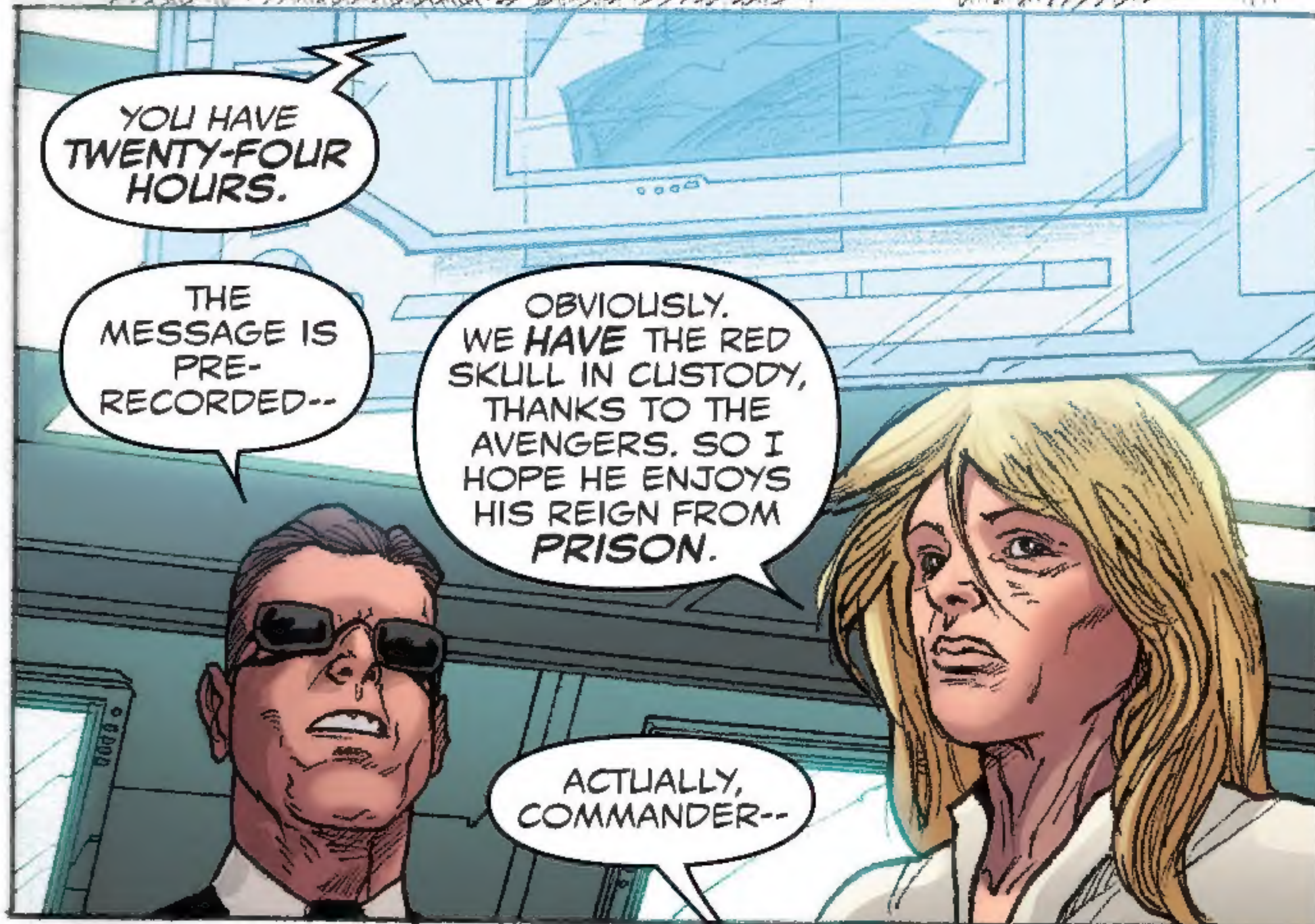
--WE ARE A **NUCLEAR** POWER THESE DAYS.

WE POSSESS **SEVEN ARMED AND OPERATIONAL WARHEADS**. EACH NOW AIMED AT A DIFFERENT-- AND POPULOUS--EUROPEAN CITY. IT IS A HEAVY BURDEN, NO DOUBT, BUT ONE WE WIELD CAREFULLY.

WE WOULD NEVER CONSIDER ACTUALLY **LAUNCHING** SUCH TERRIBLE WEAPONS-- UNLESS WE FOUND OURSELVES ISOLATED FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. OR UNLESS THE SANCTIONS AGAINST US WERE NOT LIFTED IMMEDIATELY. REST ASSURED--



--WE ONLY WANT **PEACE** IN OUR TIME, DEAR FRIENDS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR IMMEDIATE STATEMENT OF RECOGNITION...

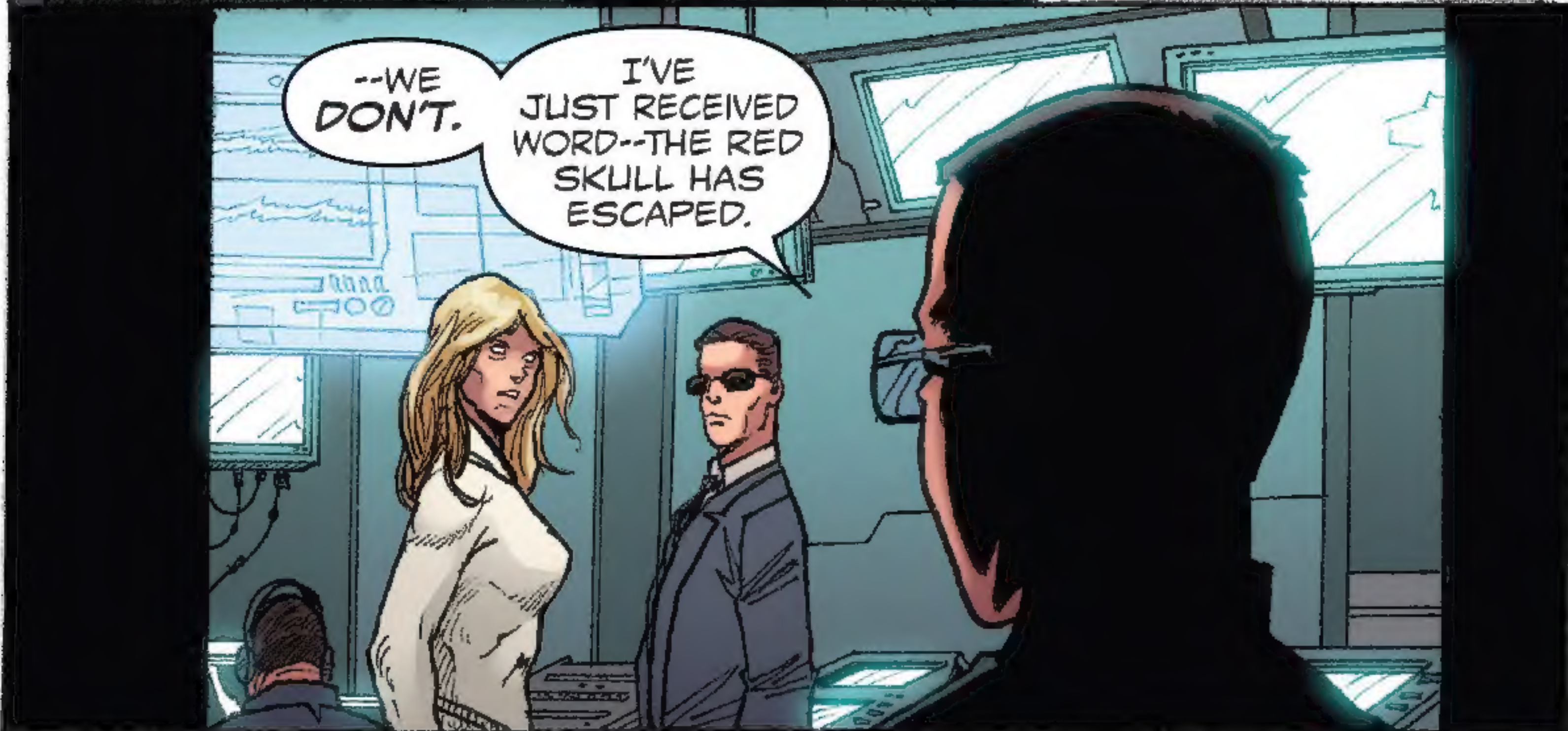


YOU HAVE **TWENTY-FOUR HOURS**.

THE MESSAGE IS PRE-RECORDED--

OBTAINING. WE **HAVE** THE RED SKULL IN CUSTODY, THANKS TO THE AVENGERS. SO I HOPE HE ENJOYS HIS REIGN FROM PRISON.

ACTUALLY, COMMANDER--



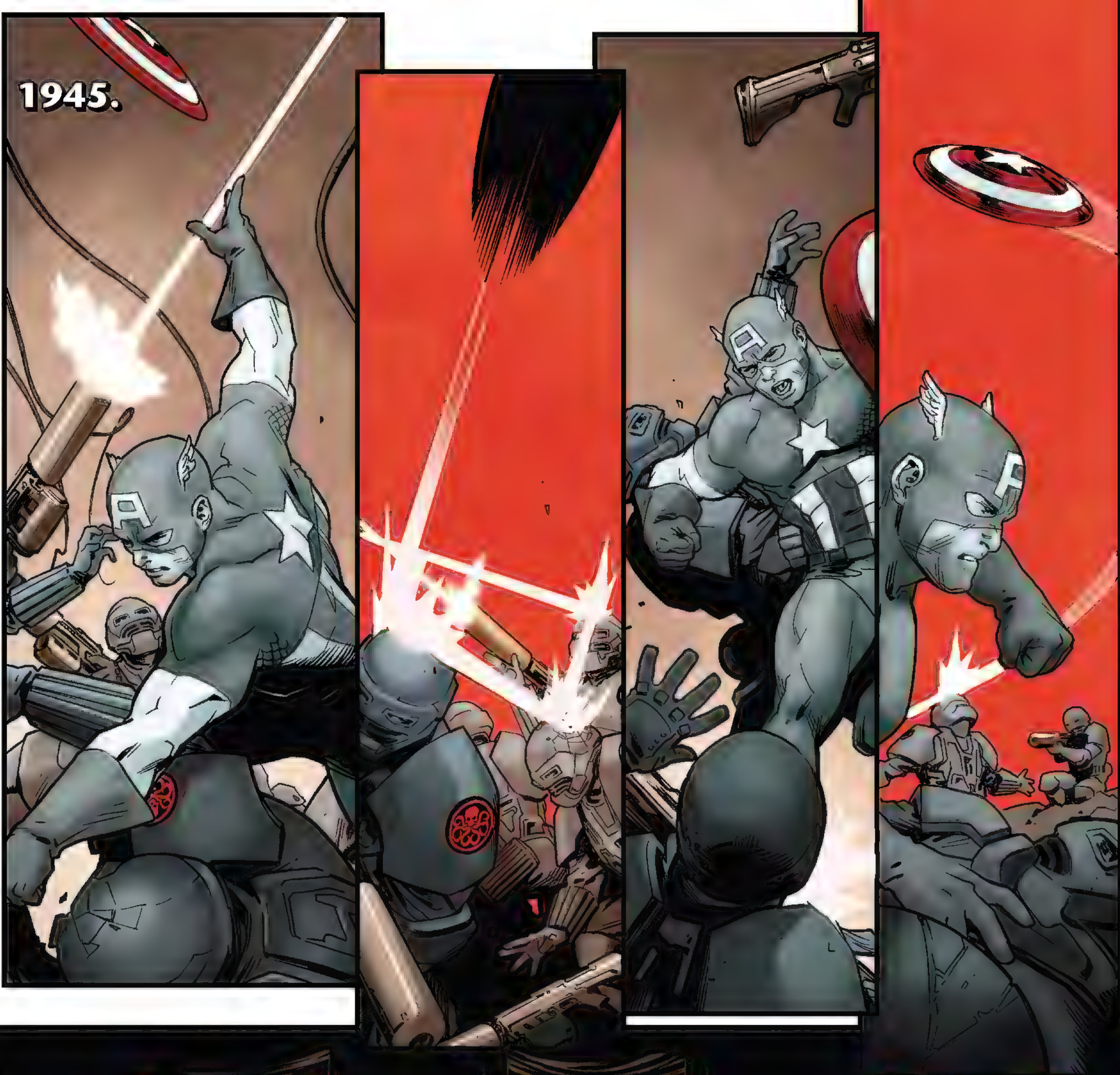
--WE **DON'T**.

I'VE JUST RECEIVED WORD--THE RED SKULL HAS ESCAPED.



GET ME THE WORLD SECURITY COUNCIL.

1945.



IT'S BEEN SO DIFFICULT TO FIND GOOD BOTTLES DURING THIS CURSED WAR, YOU KNOW.



I'VE BEEN SAVING THIS ONE FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION--



I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T GET THE CHANCE TO ENJOY IT, SKULL--

~SNIFF~ AH, YES, THAT IS LOVELY...

HEY--HEY, YOU! GUARD!



THAT VOICE--

GUARD! I NEED TO RELIEVE MYSELF! I'M TIRED OF WAITING!



AT LEAST GIVE ME A BUCKET, LIKE YOUR INBRED AMERICAN FAMILY WOULD USE--

...HELMUT?



YES--YOUNG HELMUT ZEMO, YOUR DEAREST FRIEND.

WELL, PERHAPS NOT AS MUCH *THESE* DAYS. I HEAR HE WON'T EVEN SPEAK TO YOU--AFTER YOU LET HIS BELOVED FATHER DIE.

WHAT IS THIS?



WHY, IT'S HIS CELL, OF COURSE. HE'S IN ALLIED CUSTODY, BUT--AS YOU KNOW, HYDRA HAS ITS TENTACLES EVERYWHERE.


YOU'RE NOT HYDRA--YOU'RE NOT EVEN WORTHY OF SPEAKING ITS NAME--

NO? LOOK AROUND YOU.



ALREADY, FENHOFF AND ZOLA HAVE PLEDGED THEIR LOYALTY TO ME. HEINRICH ZEMO IS DEAD, AND THE KRAKEN IS IN HIDING.

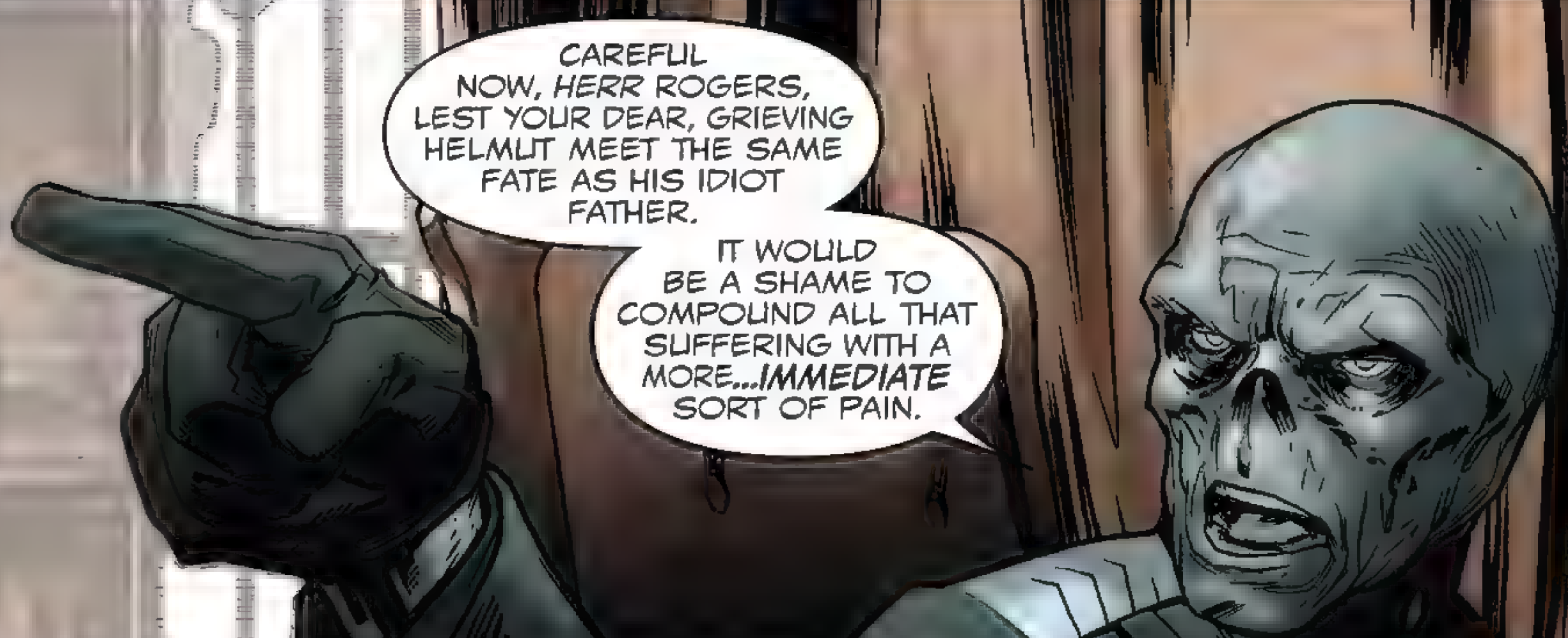
I HAVE YOUR SUPER-SOLDIERS, AND THE MEANS TO MAKE MORE. SO IF I AM NOT HYDRA, TELL ME--



--WHO IS? YOUR ORGANIZATION IS BUILT ON ORDER THROUGH **STRENGTH**. THE BELIEF THAT THE MOST POWERFUL ARE ENTITLED TO REIGN.


NOW I HAVE TURNED YOU AGAINST ONE ANOTHER AND DECIMATED YOUR RANKS. AM I NOT THE MOST POWERFUL?

NOT YET--



CAREFUL NOW, HERR ROGERS, LEST YOUR DEAR, GRIEVING HELMUT MEET THE SAME FATE AS HIS IDIOT FATHER.

IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO COMPOUND ALL THAT SUFFERING WITH A MORE...IMMEDIATE SORT OF PAIN.



OR YOU CAN PLEDGE YOUR LOYALTY TO ME, AND IN RETURN, I WILL SPARE HIM, AND THAT WITCH THAT PULLED YOU OUT OF THE SLUMS.

EVERY DAY, YOU WILL EARN THAT MERCY. TOGETHER, WE WILL CRUSH THE ALLIES AND RAISE THE HYDRA FLAG HIGH. BUT FIRST, HERR ROGERS--



--YOU MUST KNEEL.

NOW.

HAIL
HYDRA.

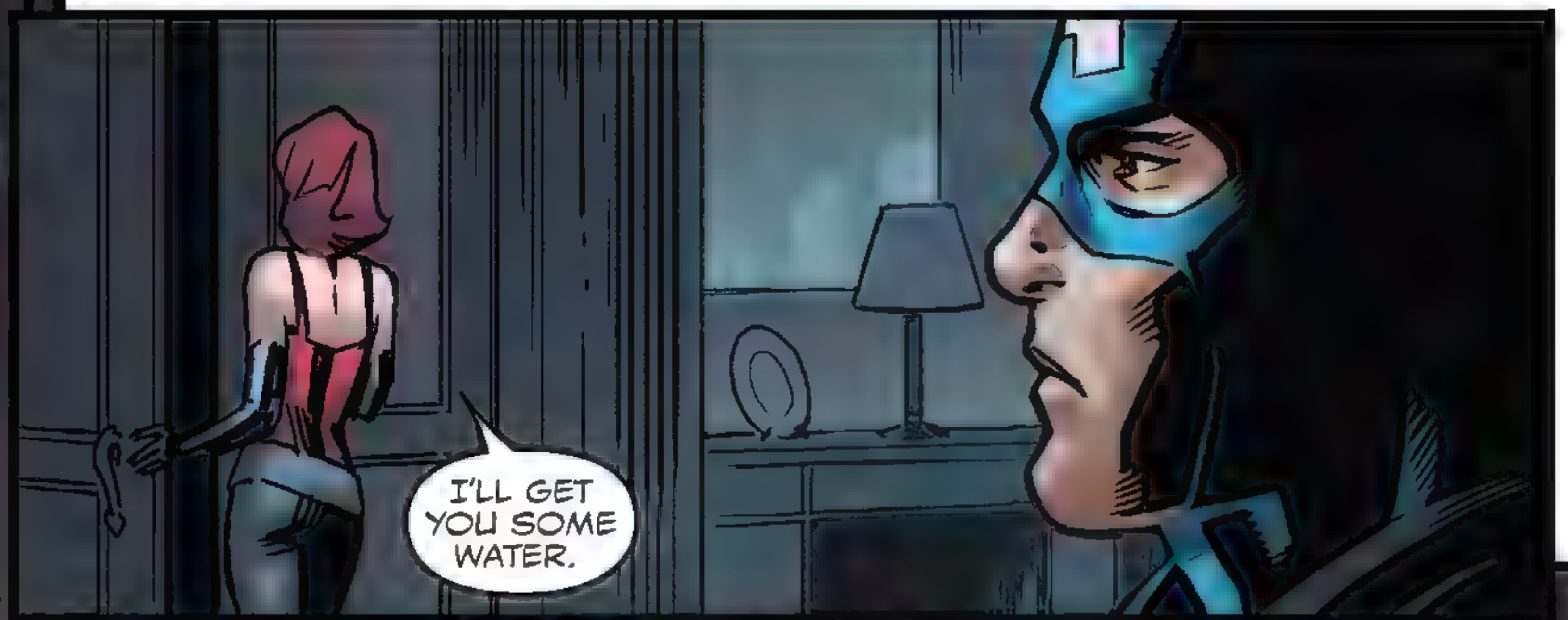
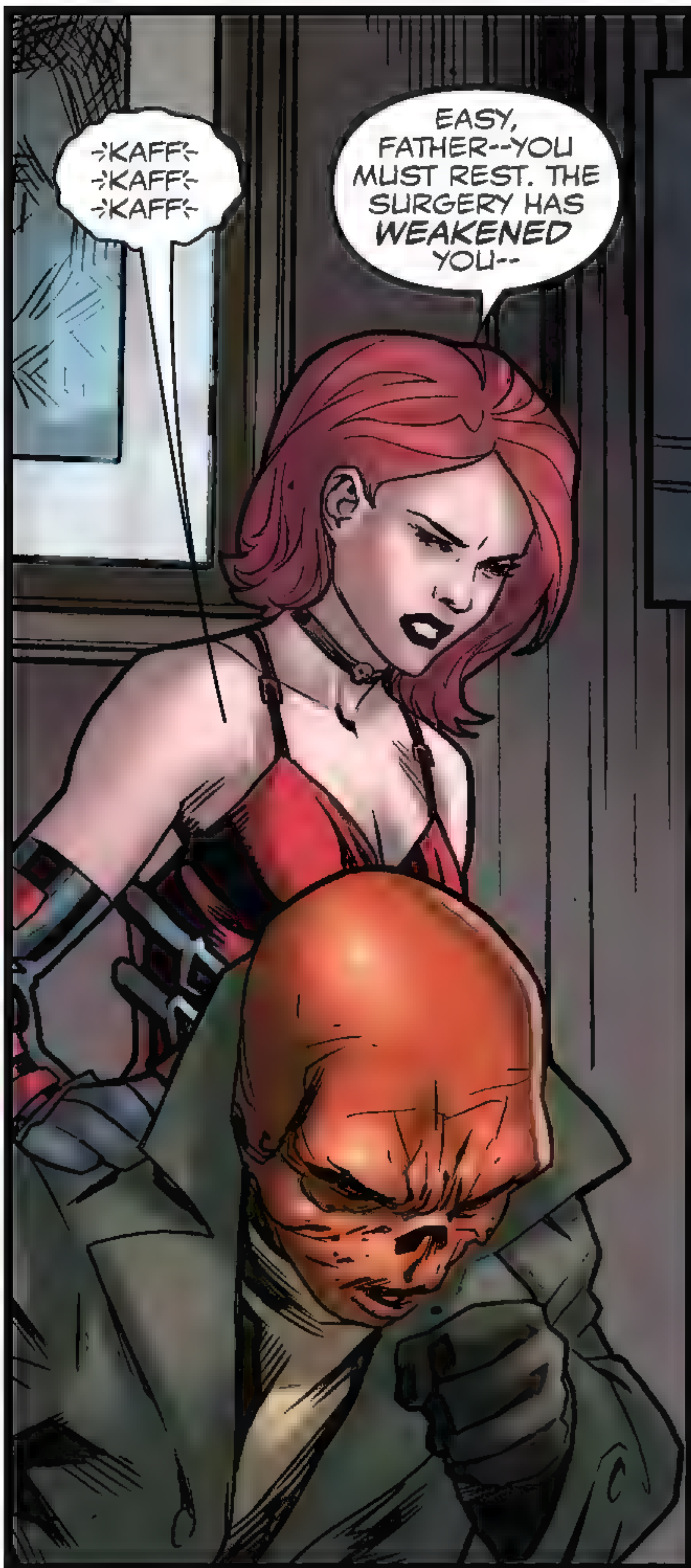
GET UP,
YOU FOOL.
I'LL ENJOY YOUR
GROVELING
ANOTHER
TIME--

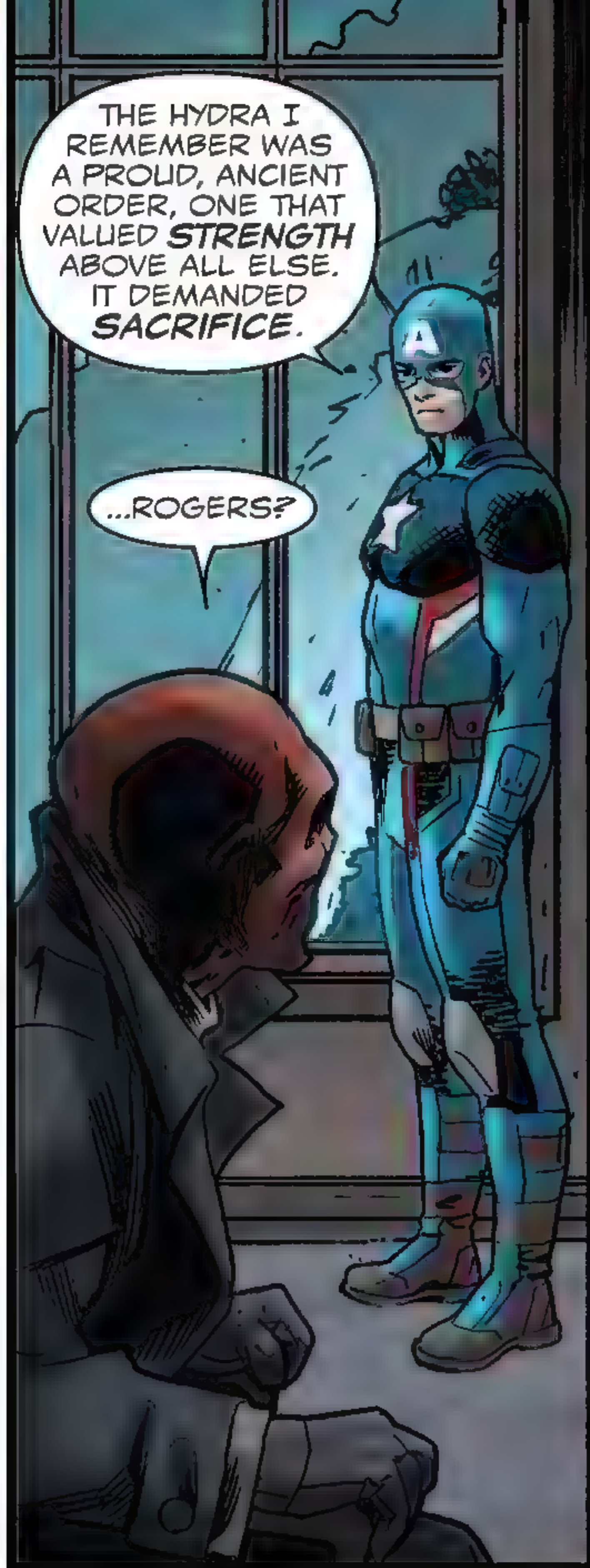
RIGHT NOW, WE
MUST STRATEGIZE. WE
MUST ADJUST. BECAUSE
MY PLAN--MY GRAND,
GLORIOUS PLAN--
HAS BEEN TORN
ASUNDER...

...FOR I
HAVE LOST THE
POWER OF CHARLES
XAVIER. OR, MORE
ACCURATELY, IT HAS
BEEN TAKEN
FROM ME.

THE
UNITY SQUAD
WAS YOUR
TEAM.

HOW
COULD YOU
LET THIS
HAPPEN?!





THE HYDRA I REMEMBER WAS A PROUD, ANCIENT ORDER, ONE THAT VALUED **STRENGTH** ABOVE ALL ELSE. IT DEMANDED **SACRIFICE**.

...ROGERS?



WHAT HAVE **YOU** EVER SACRIFICED, SCHMIDT? WHEN HAVE YOU DONE ANYTHING FOR THE GLORY OF ANYTHING OTHER THAN **YOURSELF**?

GET--GET BACK, IDIOT-- I COMMAND IT!

I THINK I'VE LISTENED TO YOUR COMMANDS LONG ENOUGH, ACTUALLY.



SIN!
CROSSBONES!

NO ONE IS GOING TO HELP YOU, SKULL-- IT'S JUST **US** NOW.



YOU DON'T REMEMBER IT, BUT A LONG TIME AGO YOU COST ME SOMETHING VERY DEAR TO MY HEART. THE THING I HAD DEDICATED MY LIFE TO. MY **PURPOSE**.

YOU TOOK IT, AND YOU TWISTED IT AND POISONED IT TO SUIT YOUR OWN SICK AIMS.



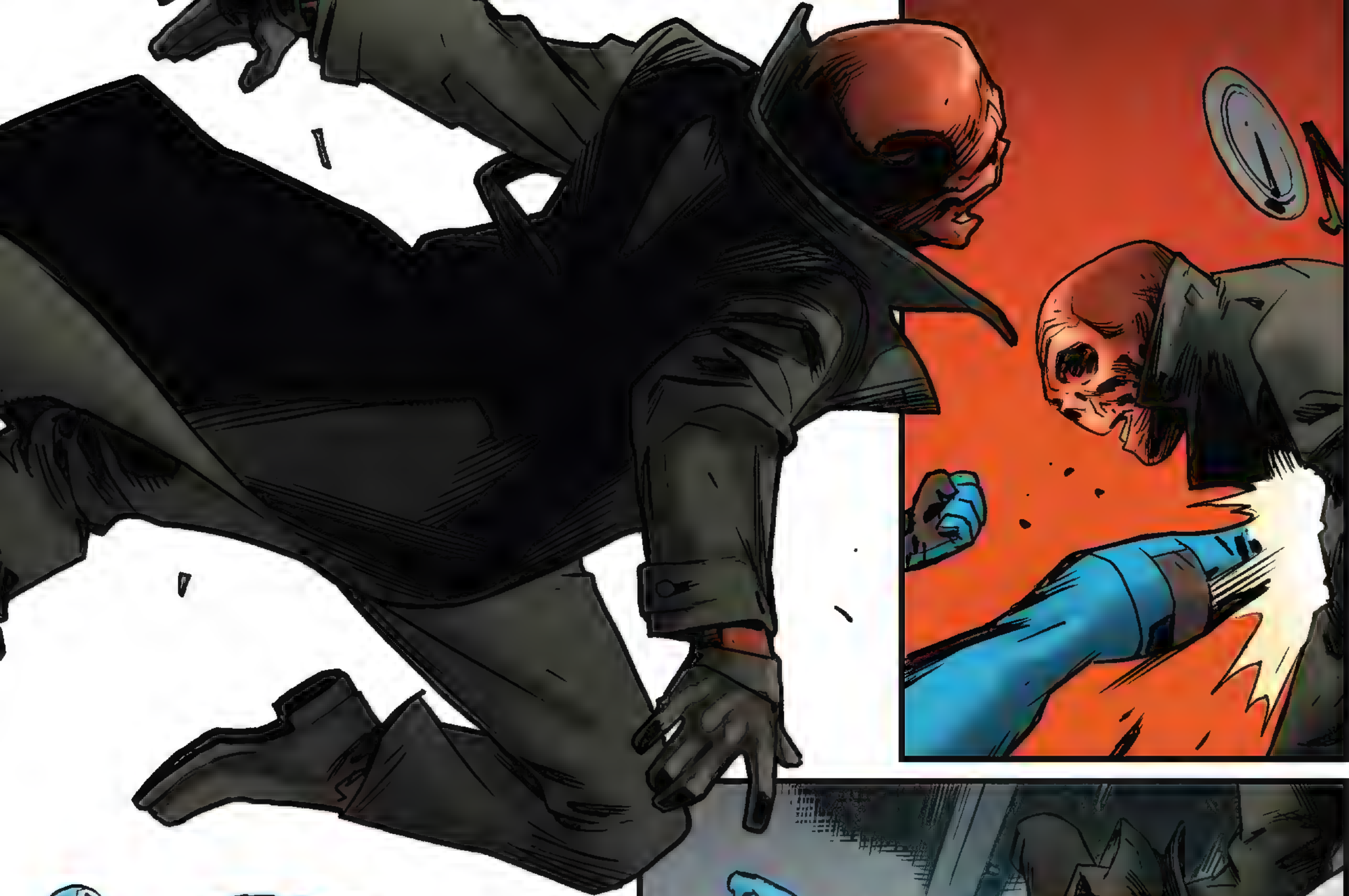
WHAT YOU DID BACK THEN PUT ME ON A DIFFERENT PATH. BUT MAYBE I SHOULD THANK YOU FOR THAT.

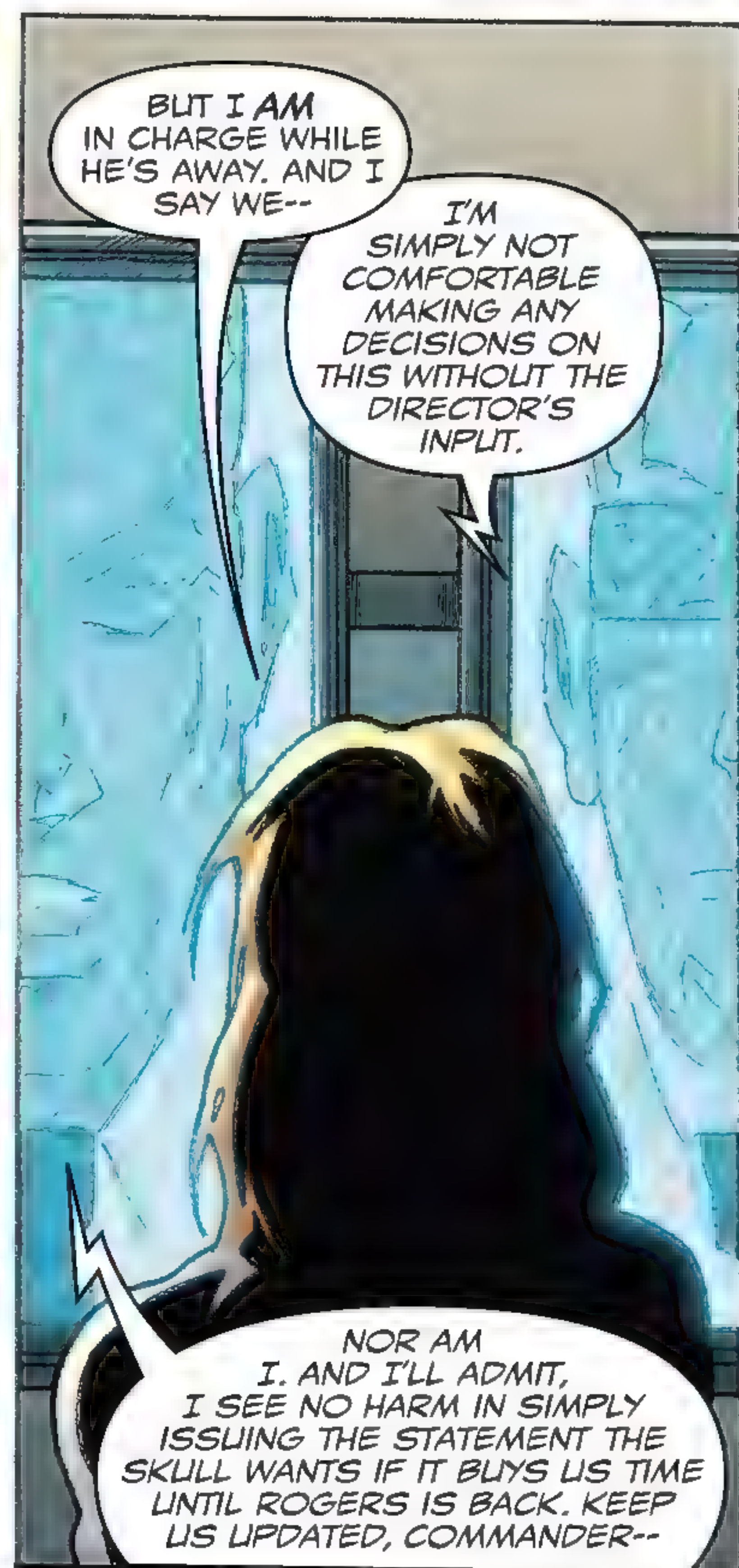
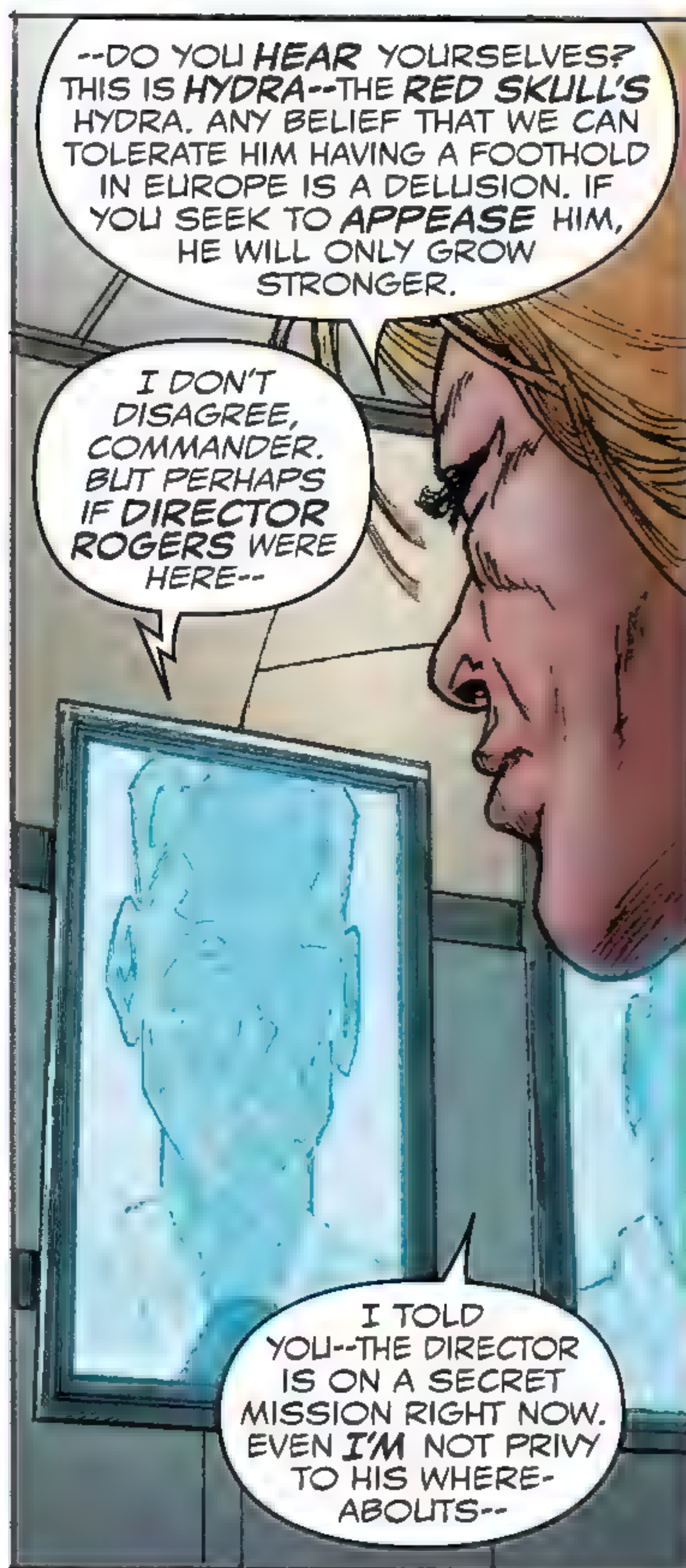
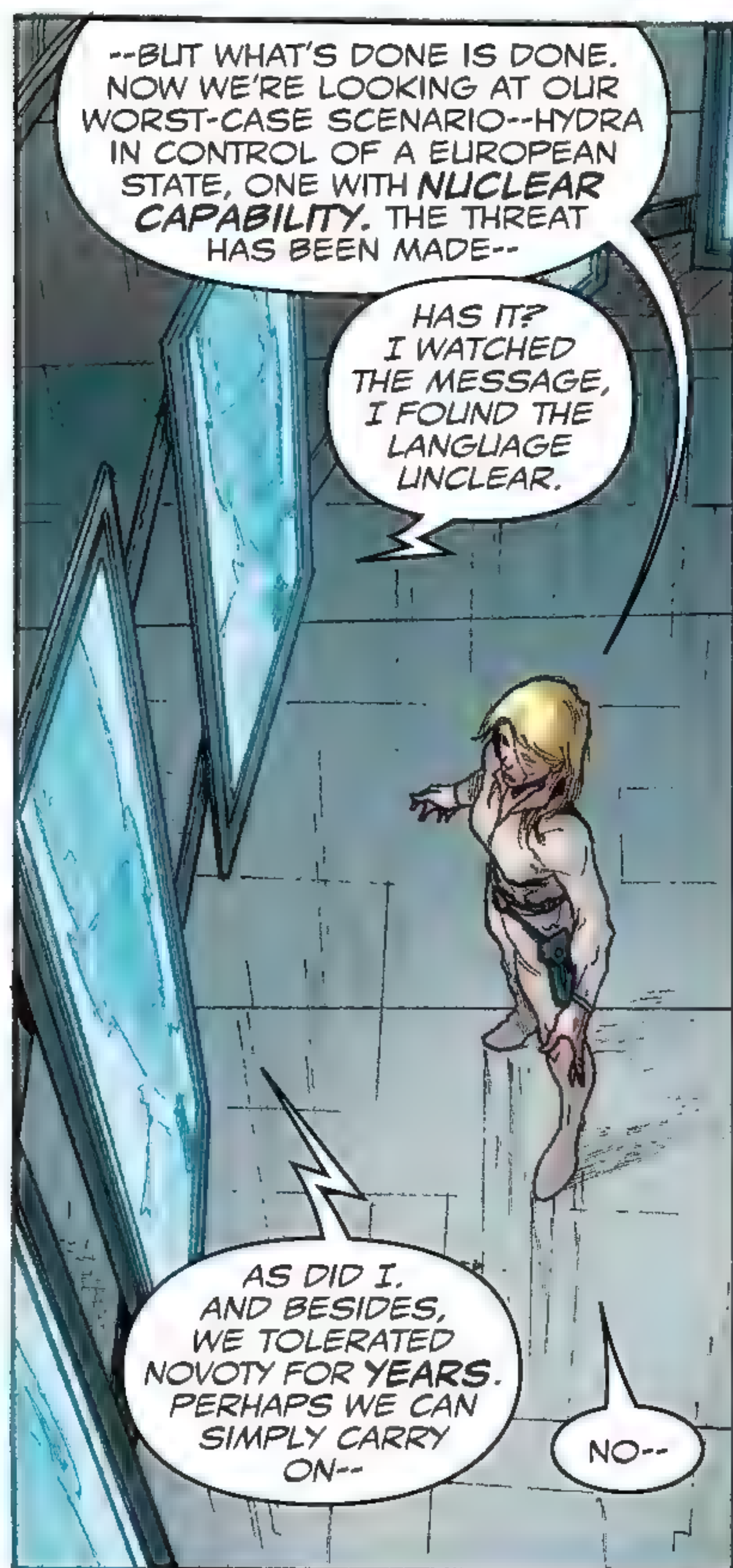
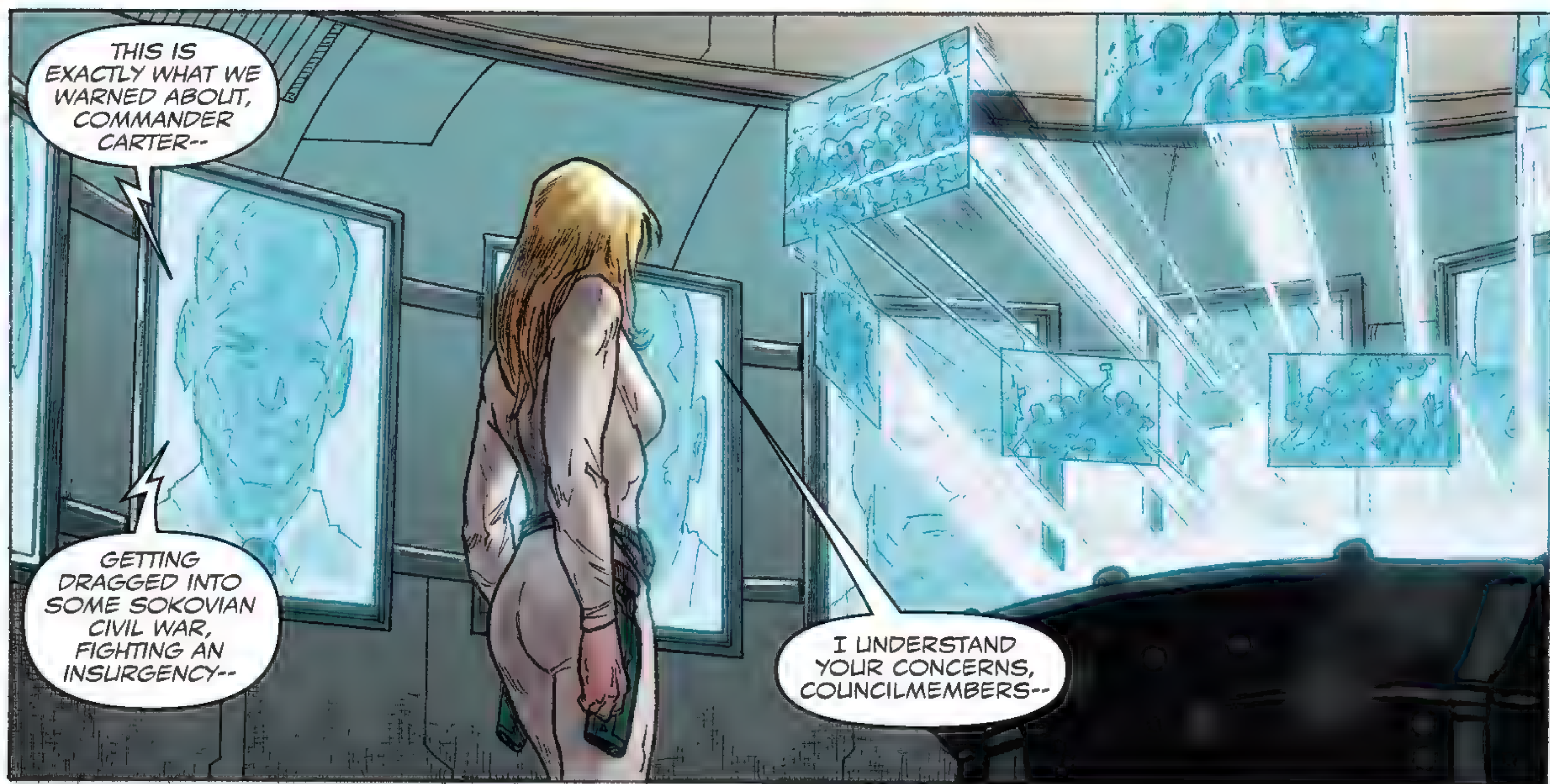
YOU SEE, ALL THAT SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE, IT MADE ME **STRONGER**. YOU MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THAT--

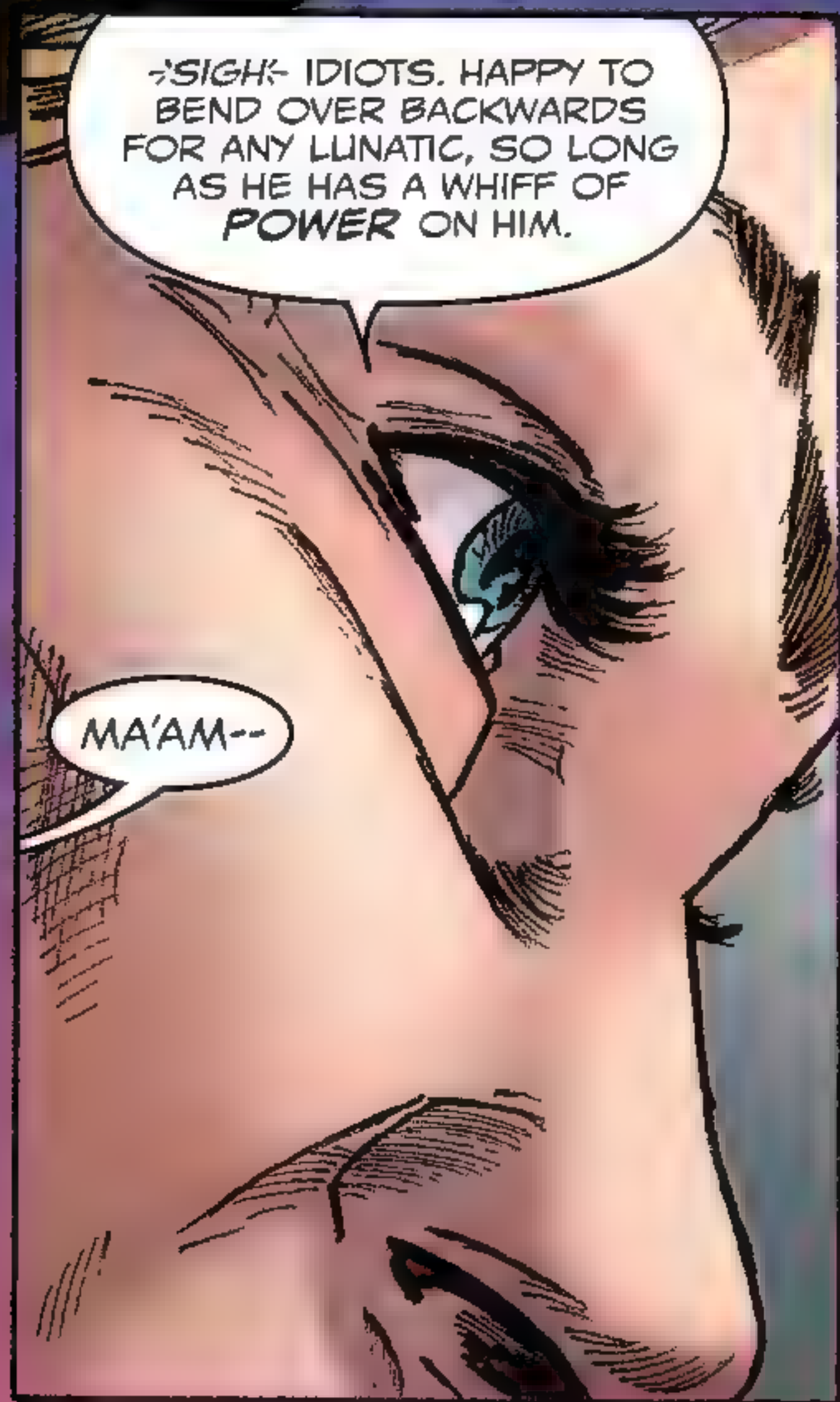


--SO LET ME SHOW YOU HOW MUCH STRONGER.

N-NO. NO--!







~SIGH~ IDIOTS. HAPPY TO BEND OVER BACKWARDS FOR ANY LUNATIC, SO LONG AS HE HAS A WHIFF OF POWER ON HIM.

MA'AM--

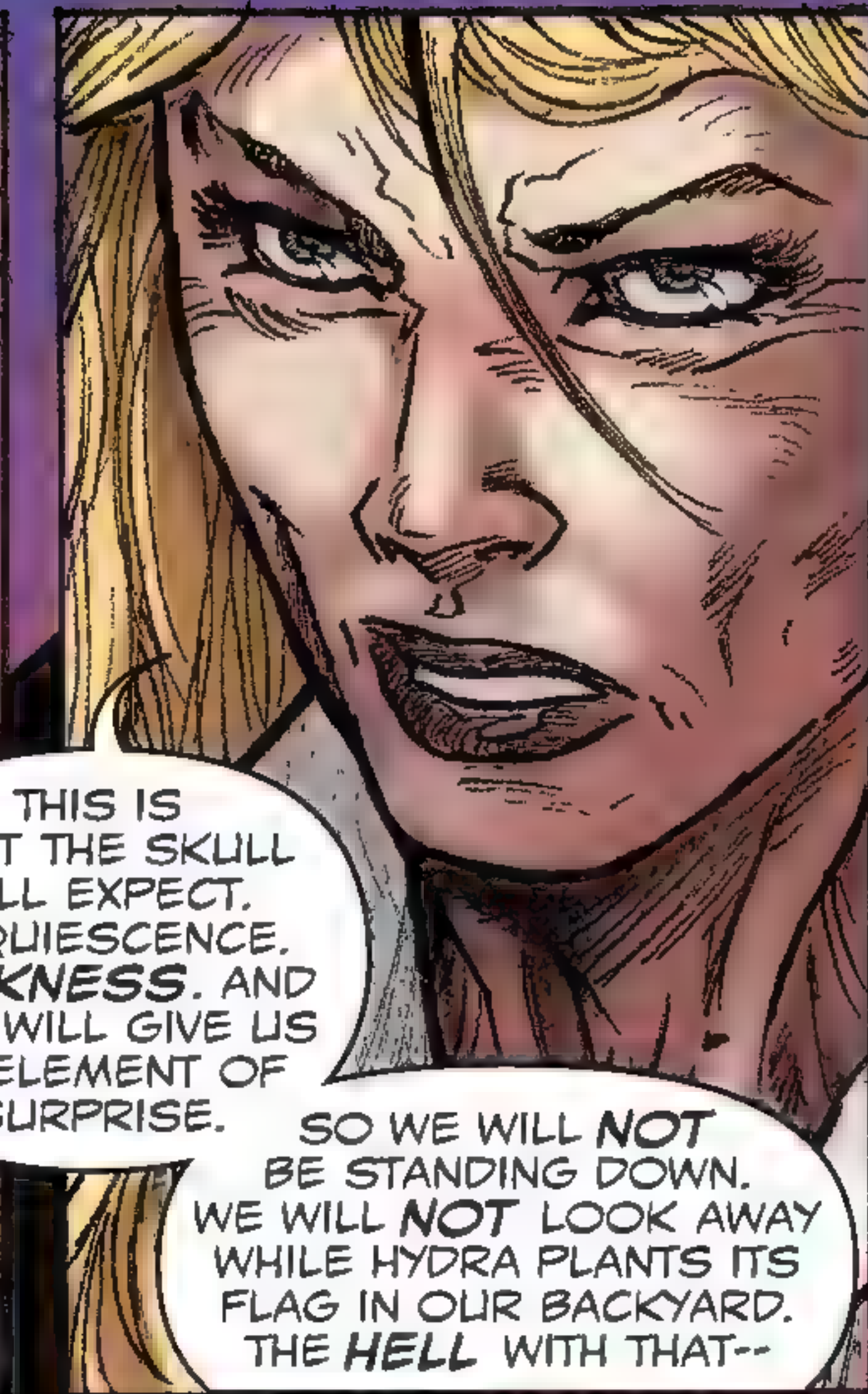


--SHALL I TELL OUR FORCES TO STAND DOWN?

NO.

...COMMANDER?

I SAID NO.

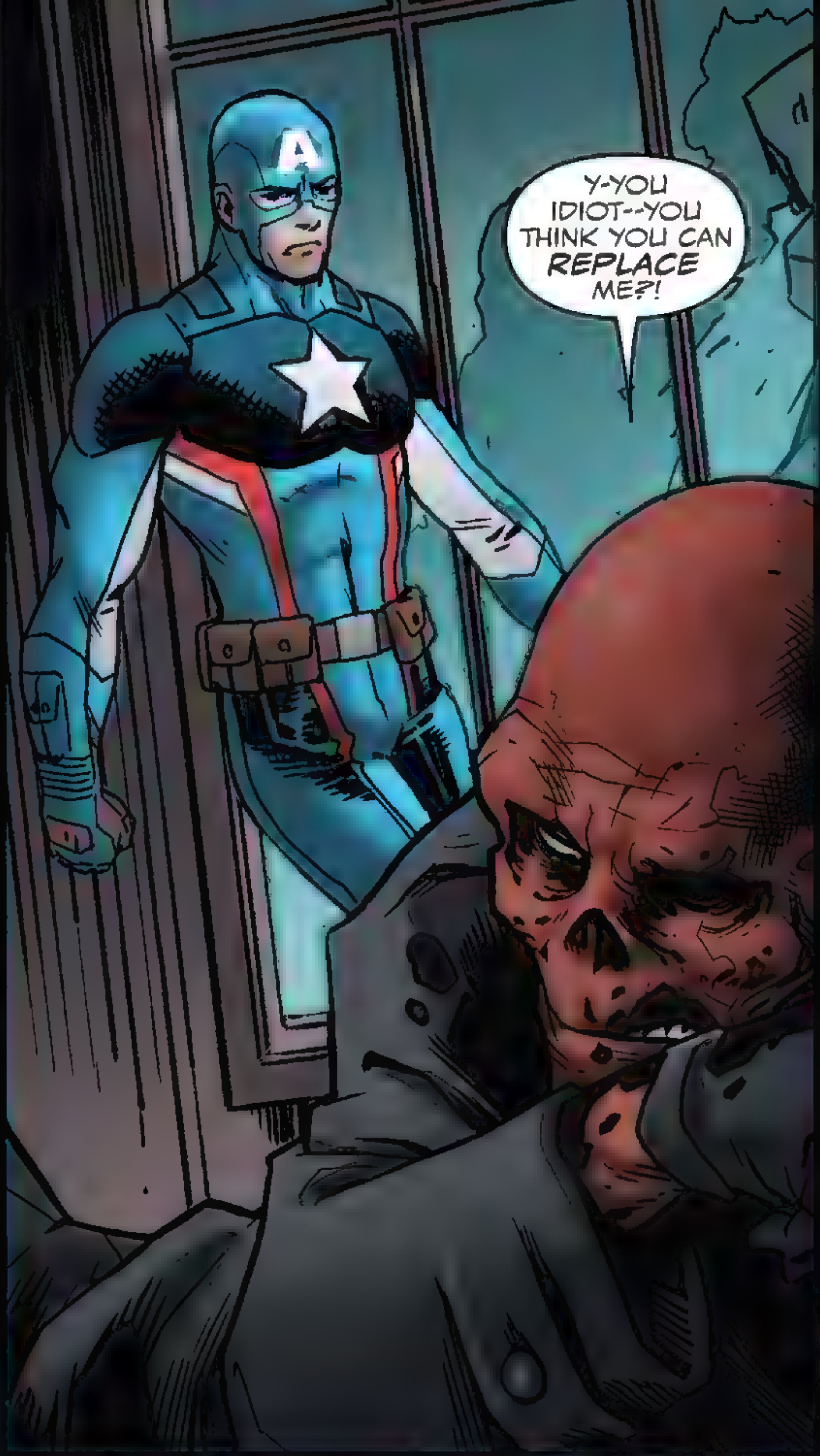


THIS IS WHAT THE SKULL WILL EXPECT. ACQUIESCENCE. **WEAKNESS.** AND THAT WILL GIVE US AN ELEMENT OF SURPRISE.

SO WE WILL **NOT** BE STANDING DOWN. WE WILL **NOT** LOOK AWAY WHILE HYDRA PLANTS ITS FLAG IN OUR BACKYARD. **THE HELL** WITH THAT--



"--ENGAGE
HELICARRIER
CRESCENT."



Y-YOU
IDIOT--YOU
THINK YOU CAN
REPLACE
ME?!



I MADE
YOU!

EVERY
MEMORY YOU
HAVE--EVERY
BELIEF YOU *THINK*
YOU HOLD--I
IMAGINED
IT UP!



IT WAS ALL
A *FANTASY!* ALL
A *DREAM!* DO
YOU HEAR ME,
ROGERS?!

I HEAR YOU.
BUT THAT'S JUST
WHAT YOU DIDN'T
UNDERSTAND...

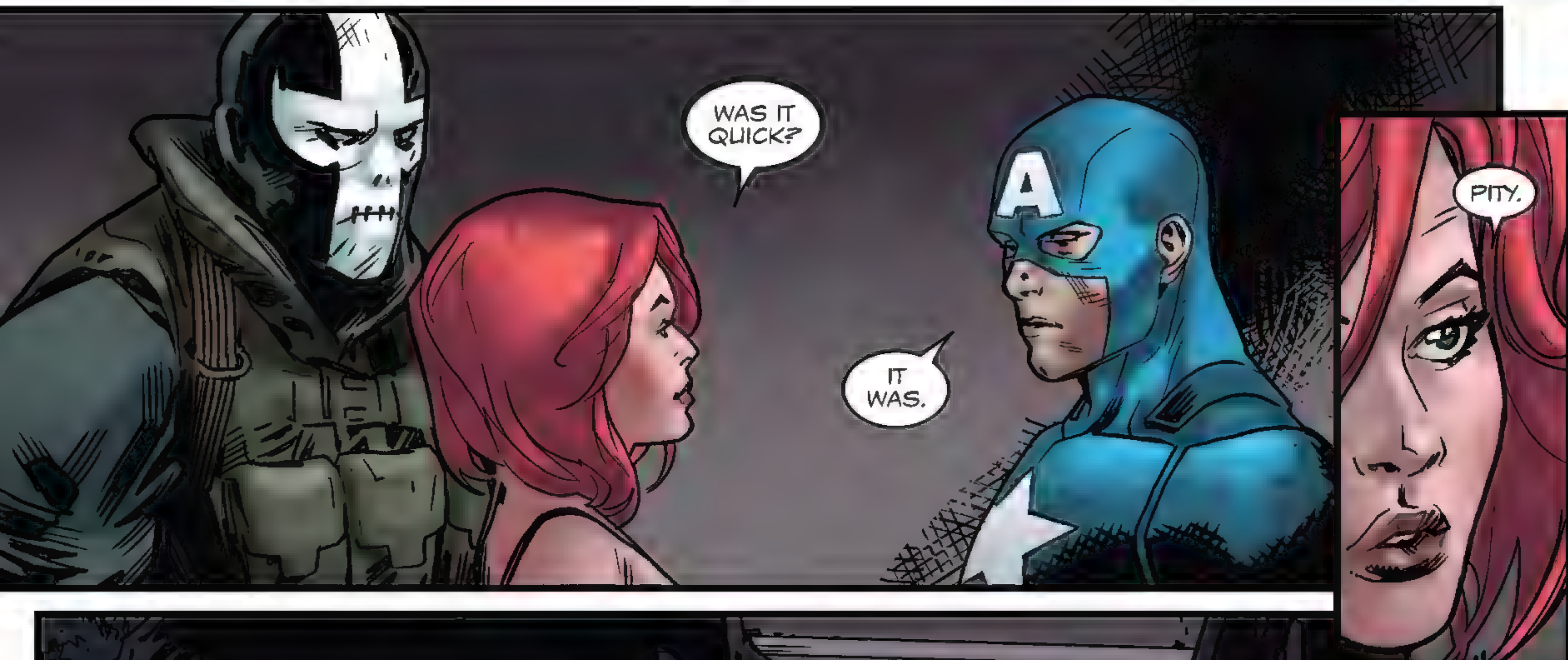
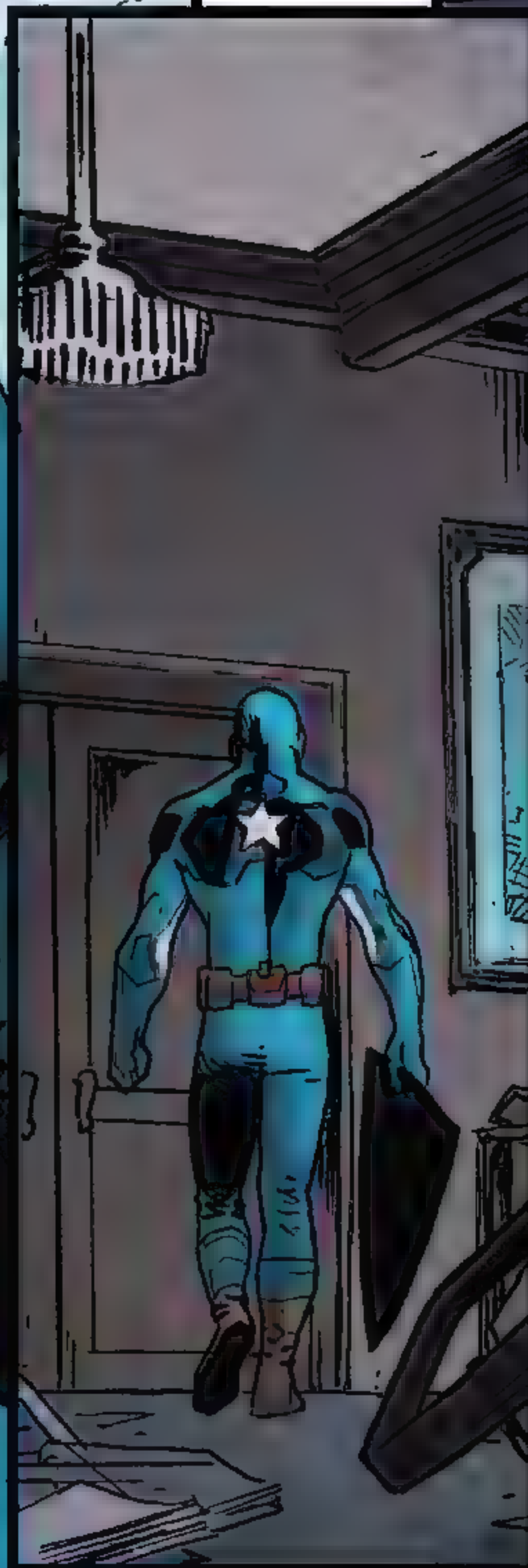


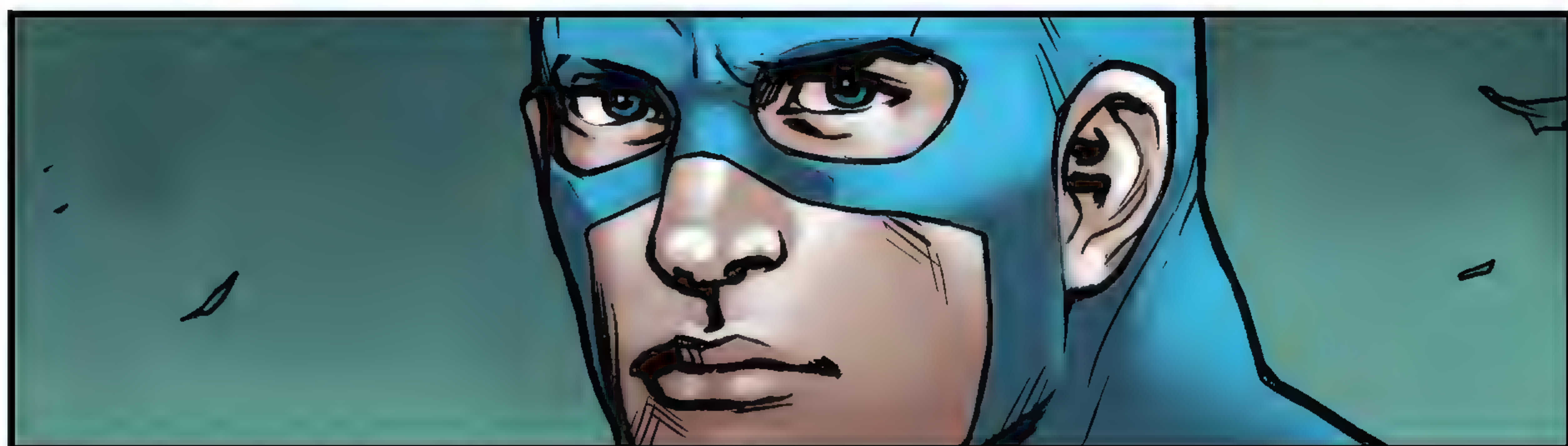
I'M LOYAL
TO NOTHING,
SKULL--



--EXCEPT
THE
DREAM.







1945.

I'M
SO SORRY,
STEVEN--

--I
WANTED
TO TELL
YOU.

ELISA...
YOU
KNEW.

I KNEW
YOU WOULDN'T
DEFEAT HIM. I KNEW
IT WAS NOT YET
YOUR TIME. OR
OURS.

HYDRA IS
BROKEN. WE
SOUGHT TO USE
THE REICH TO FURTHER
OUR OWN GOALS, AND
INSTEAD WE HAVE BEEN
SUBSUMED BY IT.
IT'S A FITTING
END--

--I DO HAVE
SOME EXPERIENCE
MAKING DEALS WITH
THE DEVIL,
AFTER ALL.

SO THAT'S IT, THEN--WE'VE
LOST. AND ALL OF THIS--
EVERYTHING I GAVE UP,
EVERYTHING I TRIED TO
DO--IT WAS ALL FOR
NOTHING?

MY DEAR
BOY--I'M SO
SORRY--

"SORRY"?



I GAVE
MY LIFE TO
THIS!



YOU
KNOW WHAT?
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
I'M LEAVING--LEAVING
THIS ENTIRE GOD-
FORSAKEN WAR
BEHIND ME--

STEVEN,
NO--YOU
CAN'T JUST
LEAVE--

THE HELL
I CAN'T!



STEVEN,
WAIT--YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND! WE
NEED YOU--NOW
MORE THAN
EVER!

THE ALLIES--
THEY'RE BUILDING
SOMETHING--
A SUPER-
WEAPON!



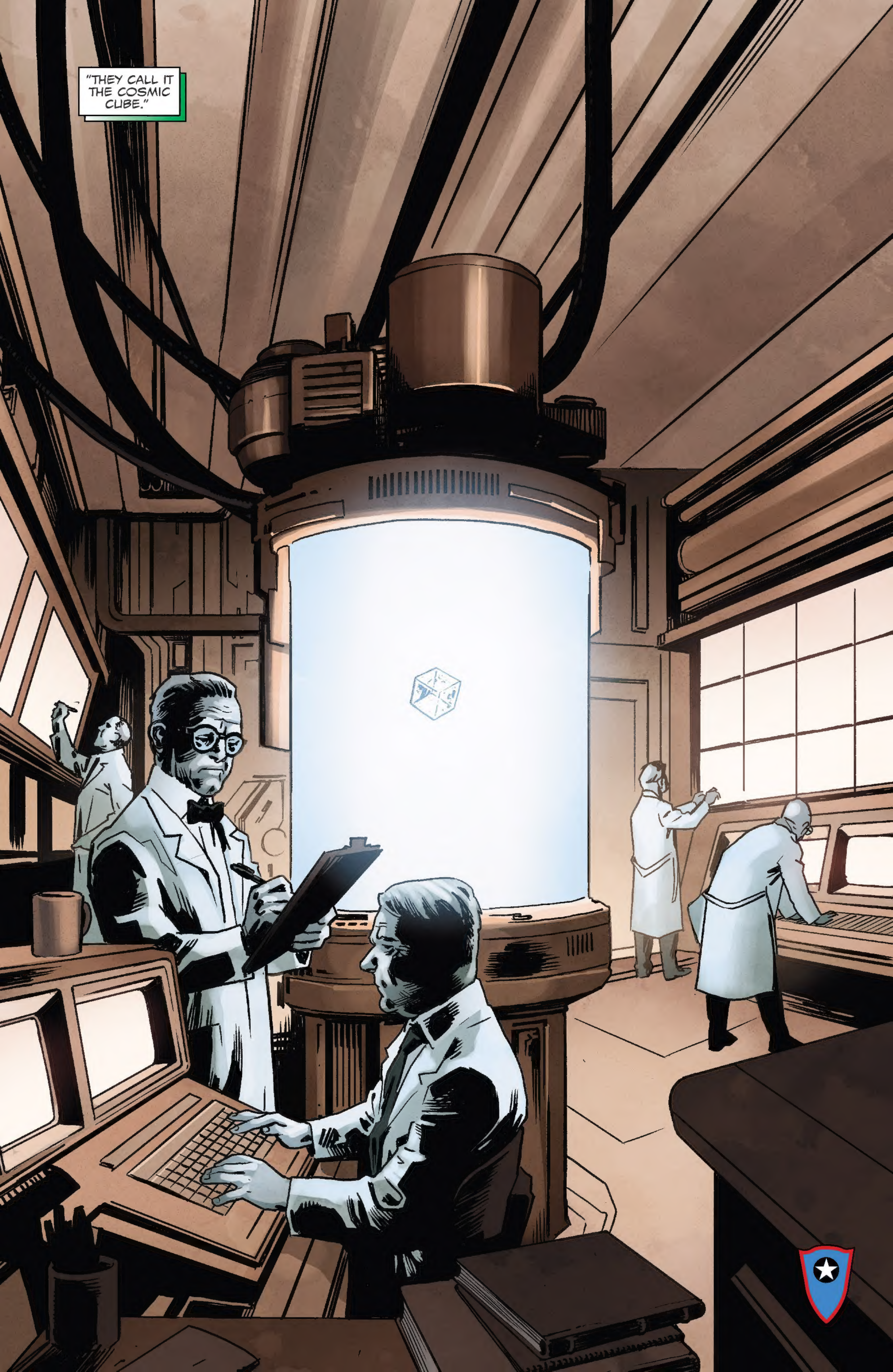
WHAT KIND
OF SUPER-
WEAPON?



SOMETHING
MORE TERRIBLE
THAN YOU CAN
POSSIBLY
IMAGINE.

THEY PLAN
TO USE IT SOON--
AND ONCE THEY DO,
THE WORLD WILL
NEVER BE THE
SAME.

"THEY CALL IT
THE COSMIC
CUBE."



NEXT



ZEMO'S "RETURN OF THE MASTERS" CONTINUES IN

THE STORY EXPANDS IN



THUNDERBOLTS #10



THUNDERBOLTS #11



UNCANNY AVENGERS #22



AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #25

